

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, IS, JO
SUBJ: WEST BANK REACTION TO PNC

1. SUMMARY: RESULTS OF PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL (PNC)
APPEARS TO FAVORABLY RECEIVED BY MAJORITY OF WEST BANK PALESTIN-
IANS. ALL APPLAUD DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND UNITY. A SMALL MINORITY
FALUT THE "15 POINTS" FOR REBUFFING JORDAN AND THE U.S., BUT
MOST FOUND EXPRESSIONS OF MODERATION THEREIN ADEQUATE FOR PRESENT.
MILITANTS WELCOME PNC'S INDEPENDENT STAND VIS A VIS ARAB STATES
AND REJECTION OF "AMERICAN SOLUTION." END SUMMARY

2. JUDGING FROM PRESS REACTION AND CONVERSATIONS WITH WIDE
SPECTRUM OF EDUCATED PALESTINIANS, THE WEST BANK IS GENERALLY
PLEASED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE PNC. GREAT PRIDE IS TAKEN IN
THE DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES FOLLOWED IN CAIRO (" A GOOD EXAMPLE
FOR ALL THE ARAB COUNTRIES" - AL FAJR) AND IN FINAL UNITY
("THE PALESTINIAN MENTALITY HAS MATURED SO THAT THE
NAY-SAYERS OF THE PAST WHO HAVE BROUGHT THE PALESTINIAN MOVE-
MENT TO A STANDSTILL ARE WEAK..." - AL QUDS)

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3. A SMALL MINORITY, REPRESENTED BY BETHLEHEM'S MAYOR FREIJ,
ARE UNHAPPY. THEY BELIEVE PNC SHOULD HAVE PLAYED TO WORLD
PUBLIC OPINION, THE ARAB STATES AND THE U.S. BY UNAMBIGUOUSLY
ACCEPTING ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST AND 242. TALK OF ARMED
STRUGGLE TO RECOVER PALESTINE THEY CONSIDER UNREALISTIC AND
COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND PLAYS INTO ISRAELI HANDS. SUCH MODERATES

REGRET THAT FINAL COMMUNIQUE REBUFFS TWO POTENTIAL ALLIES:
JORDAN, WHICH CAN NOW JUSTIFIABLY HAREN ITS STAND TOWARDS THE
PALESTINIANS, AND THE U.S. WHOSE PRESIDENT FOR THE FIRST TIME
HAD EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND.

4. MAJORITY, HOWEVER, FIND EXPRESSIONS OF MODERATION IN
15 POINTS: NO EXPLICIT CALL FOR SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC STATE
IN ALL OF PALESTINE, GENERAL AGREEMENT (INCLUDING
"REJECTIONIST") TO WB/GAZA STATE, AND A GREEN LIGHT TO
NEGOTIATIONS IF THEY ARE NOT AT THE PALESTINIANS EXPENSE.
DEPUTY MAYOR ZAFER AL MASRI OF NABLUS BELIEVES WILLINGNESS OF
PLO TO GO TO GENEVA IS A PUBLIC STATEMENT OF ARAFAT'S PRIVATE
WILLINESS TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL WITHIN ITS 1967 BORDER. THESE
OBSERVERS ALSO CREDIT REPORTS OF SIGNIFICANT, SECRET MANDATE FOR
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO ENABLE THE PLO TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE UP-
COMING PEACE EFFORTS. GREATER CONCESSIONS THAN THESE NOT
JUSTIFIED, THEY BELIEVE, IN THE FACE OF CONTINUED ALLEGED ISRAELI
INTRANSIGENCE AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S AMBIGIOUS--ALBEIT WELCOMED--
STATEMENTS IN WHICH PALESTINIANS ARE STILL REFERRED TO AS
REFUGEES.

5. A MILITANT, BUT VOCAL, MINORITY ON THE LEFT APPALUDED EX-
PLICIT REJECTION OF 242 AND AMERICAN "CAPITULATIONIST"
SOLUTIONS. INTERESTINGLY, THIS GROUP QUITE COMFORTABLE
WITH PNC STAMP OF APPROVAL FOR CONTACTS WITH "NON-ZIONIST"
JEWS.

6. COMMENT: WE HAVE HEARD LITTLE GRUMBLING FROM WEST
BANK PALESTINIANS BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DIRECTLY
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REPRESENTED AT THE PNC. IN GENERAL, THE BRAVE WORDS FROM CAIRO
HAVE BEEN A TONIC FOR THE WB MALAISE WHICH RESULTED FROM
SYRIA'S CHASTISEMENTS OF THE PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN
DAMASCUS, SADAT'S SPECULATIONS ON THE WEST BANK'S FUTURE
AND, FOR MANY, THE PLO'S EMBARRASSING RAPPROCHEMENT WITH
HUSSEIN. THOUGHTFUL OBSERVERS, HOWEVER, HOPE THAT ARAFAT,
HAVE EMERGED STRONGER FROM THE PLO'S "ELECTION CAMPAIGN"
CAN NOW USE HIS MANDATE TO REALIZE TANGIVLE RESULTS
FROM THE WEEK'S RHETORIC.
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